

VZCZCXRO4706

OO RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN
RUEHLZ RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHSK #0265 3591506
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O R 241506Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY MINSK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0035
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHSK/AMEMBASSY MINSK 0036

UNCLAS MINSK 000265

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [BO](#)

SUBJECT: BELARUS: PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION HEAD ON FURTHER
"POSITIVE POLITICAL STEPS"

REF: A) MINSK 264, B) MINSK 261

1. (SBU) Head of the Belarusian Presidential Administration Vladimir Makey received Charge for a one-on-one, 30-minute meeting December 24. He reported to Charge that "positive political steps" would continue, to include an initiative by the Presidential Administration to form a group or council with some members of the opposition to discuss issues including the global financial crisis. Charge responded that serious members of the opposition were indeed interested in such an approach (ref A).

2. (SBU) Charge acknowledged some recent developments, including the registration of Alyaksandr Milinkevich's "For Freedom" movement, the public circulation of independent newspapers "Nasha Niva" and "Narodnaya Volya" -- while noting that there were still some constraints on both papers (ref B) -- and the interest expressed by the GOB in reworking the electoral code with the assistance of OSCE/ODIHR. He expressed the strong desire that positive changes would be made and sustained in those and other areas as other organizations remain unregistered and other independent media are still blocked from public access. Charge also raised the case of an imprisoned AMCIT (septel). Makey offered to meet with Charge again in the New Year to discuss all of these issues and others as well.

Bio information

3. (U) According to public sources, Makey was born in the Grodno region on August 5, 1958. In 1980, he graduated from the Minsk State Teachers' Training Institute of Foreign Languages (currently Minsk State Linguistic University). He served in the Soviet military from 1980 until 1992, and received training at the Diplomacy Academy in Vienna in 1992-93. He holds the military rank of reserve Colonel. Makey served in the Belarusian Foreign Ministry between 1993 and 2000. In 1993-95 he was a Third Secretary in the Directorate of Information and Humanitarian Cooperation, a Second Secretary in the MFA's Department of Analysis and Forecasting, and a Second Secretary in the MFA's Secretariat. In 1995-1996, Makey worked as the deputy chief of the MFA's State Protocol Service. He was a Counselor at the Belarusian Embassy in Paris between 1996 and 1999, and the head of the MFA's Pan-European Cooperation Department in 1999 and 2000. In March 2000, he was appointed to the Presidential Administration. Makey became Head of the Presidential Administration when his predecessor, Gennadiy Nevyglas, was fired in July 2008.

4. (SBU) Makey first introduced himself to Charge at an evening event marking Belarus' national day on July 3, 2008 -- just hours before the bombing incident that resulted in Nevyglas' departure from office -- and suggested a meeting to Charge at a December 16 dinner hosted by the Lithuanian Ambassador. At that dinner and the meeting, Makey was cordial and thoughtful, and avoided the rhetoric often favored by the MFA and many other GOB officials. He speaks some English, but prefers to use Russian;

his German is said to be quite fluent from service with the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany during the Cold War where his duties allegedly mirrored those of then-contemporary Vladimir Putin.

MOORE